

# First Nighters See Nine New Plays In New York In Week



Holiday Calls Forth an Unusually Large Crop of Theatrical Productions.

(By Emory B. Colvert.)

New York, N. Y., Nov. 28.—The Thanksgiving holiday called forth an unusually large crop of plays this week, no less than nine virgin productions being staged for the benefit of New York's first nighters. Among these were "The Paper Chase," at Wallack's; "Mere Man," at the Harris theater; "The Road to Arcady," at the Berkeley Lyceum; "Much Ado About Nothing," at the Thirty-ninth Street; "The High Road," at the Hudson; "Mrs. Xmas Angel," late of the Harris theater, now in Philadelphia; "Broadway to Paris," at the Winter Garden; "Rolly Polly," at "Without the Law," at the Webber and Field's Music hall, and "The Whip," at the Manhattan Opera house.

"The Paper Chase."

Louis N. Parker, the playwright, and madam Simone, the actress, both scored successes on Monday night in the latter's presentation of the former's play, "The Paper Chase," which opened at Wallack's theater. "The Paper Chase" is billed as "an irrepressible comedy." Its scenes and characters are drawn from the year 1780, and its lines from the wit and humor storehouse of Louis N. Parker. His madam Simone plays the part of Bettina, the Baroness von Schoenberg. The action takes place in the court of Versailles during the time that the Austrian princess, then queen of France, was supposedly threatened by the Red Cap club, a band of revolutionaries headed by the duke of Richelieu.

The duke of Richelieu, as head of this secret organization, made out a list of its members which was stolen by Bettina before the play opens. The entire four acts of the comedy are, therefore, devoted to endeavoring to recover this valuable paper, hence the name "The Paper Chase."

Throughout the chase to recover the list of names is woven a love story, whose bright lines and humorous situations are based upon mistaken identity. The love passages take place between the Marquis of Belange and Bettina, whom he has met at a ball disguised in a domino. Belange is an ardent supporter of Richelieu.

DeWitt C. Jennings and Chrystal Hume are playing in "Mere Man," at the Harris theater. Marie Dressler is with Webber & Field's, whose twin burlesques, "Rolly Polly" and "Without the Law," had their premiere this week at Webber & Field's new Music hall. Harry Placide is with "Sun Dodgers" at the Broadway. And madame is an operatic star who has been arousing much curiosity by her appearance in vaudeville wearing a mask. The prima donna has refused to disclose her identity, fearing that her vaudeville appearance might interfere with her operatic bookings.

Heu and does not know that he has given his heart to the woman that stole the duke's papers until the third act when he raids her apartment in an effort to secure these documents. To further complicate matters, the pair are discovered by the Duke of Richelieu and the other paper chasers.

The play has a pleasant ending in the fourth act when Bettina is shown at a dinner party given by the Marquis of Belange and the list of names is discovered and returned to its rightful owner.

It is true that many of the things that Mr. Parker has portrayed in his play have never been chronicled by historians of France, but he can be forgiven his inaccuracies because of the height of his comedy success. Besides madam Simone, whose vivid acting lent luster to the piece, Julian Eltinge as the Marquis of Belange, and Edgar Kent as the Duke of Richelieu, gave notable performances.

A queer mixture of astrology and suffragism was offered by Augustus Thomas, at the Harris theater on Monday night under the title of "Mere Man." Mr. Thomas has labeled his new play a "comedy," and has devoted himself so assiduously to developing humor in his lines, that he seems to have quite forgotten the plot, or at any rate, to have so complicated that very necessary adjunct to either comedy or tragedy that the average play-

goer found it rather difficult to follow the thread of the story.

The astrologer, it might be mentioned in rather laudatory, a very beautiful young lady. Beyond that it seems unsafe to venture.

In general it seems to have been Mr. Thomas's aim to show that mere man is some thousand times or so more complicated with regard to his mental makeup than is the woman. On the whole, however, it may be said that Mr. Thomas has confused his issues and might as well have done nothing at all.

Of the acting praise is justified. Here Mr. Thomas, who has personally rehearsed the play, has done much more than in the play itself. He has taken actors and actresses, who, with the exception of Miss Chrystal Hume, were practically unknown and has drilled them so well that they are almost a constant pleasure.

"The Road to Arcady."

The second play produced by the National Federation of Theater clubs had its premier at the Berkeley Lyceum on Monday night. It was called "The Road to Arcady," and was written by E. J. Tupper.

The story of the play deals with an ambitious mother who is anxious to marry her daughter to a rich man.

Her daughter objects strenuously, having already given her love to a college mate of her younger brother. The mother, on hearing of this, is determined to force her daughter to marry the rich man. She calls his friend on the wire and arranges for the runaway match.

In the meantime, however, the mother, in order to gain her end, has willfully told her daughter a lie. She says that the father has been accused of wrongfully taking funds from the firm he is working for and makes it evident that he cannot be saved other than through the daughter's marriage to the rich man.

The daughter, who believes this story and, knowing that she can save her father, eventually marries the man whom she hates. In the cast were Frank Weston, as Oliver Gerard, the father; Albert Latscha, as Robert, his son; Wilson Hume, as Wilson Churchill, the hateful rich man; Lily Cahill, the charming daughter; Ida Waterman, as Mary Hamilton, who was the mother of John Hamilton, the college friend, acted by Franklin Ritchie and Leona Ball was an exceedingly pretty French maid of the Gerard household.

"Much Ado About Nothing."

The revival of Shakespeare, which seems to have swept over the metropolis of late, was kept to Monday night by Miss Annie Russell's production of "Much Ado About Nothing," at the Thirty-ninth Street theater. Miss Russell seems to have an abiding faith in the efficacy of Shakespeare to compete with the products of our latest Broadway playwrights, and so far her successes have given credit to her perspicacity.

As Miss Russell has not interpolated new lines in the somewhat time worn version of "Much Ado About Nothing," so familiar to players there is little necessity for reviewing the play at length. We proceed, therefore, to a survey of the actors.

Miss Russell acted the part of Beatrice and a bright and sparkling Beatrice she made. Frank Reicher played the part of Benedick, the cousin of Beatrice, and George Giddens had the role of Dogberry. Each of these three principals gave a brilliant performance, though it might be said of Miss Russell that her country could have been a little less forced. In her defense of her maligned cousin and in the subsequent scenes with Benedick she could hardly have been better, however.

From the standpoint of the casual Shakespearean playgoer, the performances of Frank Reicher and George Giddens, were perfect. The rest of the cast appeared to be well drilled and thoroughly conversant with Shakespearean interpretations according to the editors of the principals.

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laid down for her is susceptible to love.

In his home is a young artist, Allen Wilson, who spends his odd moments in introducing to his friends a love of the beautiful and incidentally of himself. In this act another character is introduced, Winfield Barnes, a young country lawyer, whom Allen Wilson has created out of money justly due him and who to ward the close of the first period sets out from New England to seek his fortune. Mary Page and Allen Wilson also leave the farm, clandestinely.

The succeeding acts cover three years of the life of Allen Wilson and Mary Page. The show has air months spent in Paris and Rome, installed in a Riverside Drive apartment with the artist. Here another character is introduced, a stepson, Maddock, prospective capitalist and owner of newspapers, and friend of Allen Wilson. Here also, Mary Page becomes acquainted to a situation that bears no legality in the eyes of the conventional world and decides to leave her lover.

Becomes interested in a strike of laundry workers, leaves Wilson and takes up the cause of these down-trodden workers. Her social position is pressed upon her to the capital of the state, where she favors a woman's suffrage bill and visits the governor, whose aid has been sought by her and the other workers in the field. Then the Winfield Barnes, whom she knew at her father's home. In a well loved scene, the lawyer, whom her father detested in his youth, confesses his love for the former country girl and is accepted.

By the standards of honesty it now devolves upon her to confess that she has lived with Allen Wilson as his wife for the past year and a half, and that she is pregnant.

Beyond this point, which would make an obvious and happy ending, the play takes a course that is decidedly successful. Now he is a presidential candidate, and she is a woman of election. Maddock, however, grown to a man of influence and owner of a string of newspapers, opposes his election, and knowing the past story of the couple's wife threatens to expose her untruthfulness to the public. Barnes promises on a labor plank in his party platform.

Mary sends for Maddock, whom she seeks to placate by a appeal to his generosity. This failing she threatens to give the story to the Associated Press and to allow the nation to know of the country to judge of her conduct for themselves. Maddock feels himself beaten and notifies his associates not to make the exposure. The termination is especially lame and far-fetched, but it has been ended at some earlier stage of the story.

The setting, however, was exceptionally fine. Frederick Perry, playing the part of Winfield Barnes; Charles Waldron, the role of Allen Wilson; Arthur Byron, as John Stephen; Maddock, and Mrs. Fiske, as Mary Page all gave excellent performances.

"Mrs. Xmas Angel."

A delightful little Christmas play had its premier at the Harris theater on Tuesday afternoon. The name of the Yuletide confection was appropriately "Mrs. Xmas Angel."

Laurence Ery, the playwright, has built a story of the play about the longing of an invalid child for a real Christmas. The scenes are cast in an east side tenement. The story follows Henrietta Hennaberry now deceased, mother's character. The actress who of Frank is living in a tenement, eking out an existence by sewing. Her child is ill and about to submit to a surgical operation, when the grandfather comes secretly on a mission of charity and the grandmothers follow.

The best scenes of the play involve a meeting of the grandmother and the child to whom the old woman, of course, succumbs. The child has been longing for a real Christmas, and mistakes the grandmothers for the angels. The idea is charmingly handled and the role of the child is delightfully done.

Old Jacob Hennaberry was played by Albert Reed and Henrietta Hennaberry by Florence Arnold. Both of these artists distinguished themselves by their performances, as did the cast in general.

"The High Road."

selves by their performances, as did the cast in general.

"Mrs. Xmas Angel" is now in Philadelphia.

"Broadway to Paris." A new winter garden review entitled "Broadway to Paris," made its appearance on Wednesday night. It immediately won fame as the most extravagant of the late productions in that playhouse.

The first number revealed Gertrude Hoffman, as a vampire in the dance Dracula with a Latin charm. Later in the evening she appeared in "The Garden of Girls," supported by a ballad of mystery. The attraction of girls was one of the most attractive features of a long program of specialties.

The second number was a little French story in the music of a continuous story in the new review. There is in the romantic plots which have been in the Hippodrome specialties. It was simply one episode after another, all the things happening in or near Paris and largely at the theater Olympia.

Among the profusion of features Mrs. Borden struck a moderate and quite pleasing note in a little French song which she followed with her first effort in English. He it recorded that the English was perfectly good.

Other leading contributors to the entertainment in its various parts were Marion Sunshine, Sam Mann and Louis Bresler. The books of lyrics were by George Brownson Howard, and Harold Hoffer. The music was by Max Hoffman and Anatol Friedland.

Webber and Field's New Opening. Those ancient entertainers, Joe Webber and Lew Fields, made their appearance this year in "Rolly Polly" and "Without the Law," both burlesques. Their laughing ensembles and vaudeville stunts were staged at the new Webber and Fields Music hall and had their premiere on Monday night.

In "Rolly Polly" the three scenes of which are laid at the spring of Raaten-ville, the village, by fraud succeeds in having records entered on the pastor's books of the marriage of Mrs. D'Aquila and Earl Hubert. That spoils temporarily the earl's romance with lady Diana and causes him to waste his greater part of his fortune.

Lady Diana, meeting him by accident, tells him of her belief in him and gives him a "rip on the whip." When Capt. Sartoris learns of that he plans to track the car carrying the horse to the race track.

The car is smashed and scores of persons are hurt, but the horse escapes injury. Then Sartoris obtains a warrant for the arrest of the jockey, who has threatened to kill him. He seizes it a moment before the race is to begin, but the enthusiastic fans tear the jockey from the sheriff's hands and toss him on "The Whip." The horse gets to the post at the last second and, of course, wins.

The story is told in four acts and 13 scenes, with one of brilliant coloring and picturesque effect.

Texas Girl's Success. Persons who are interested in

watching the careers of native sons and daughters of Texas, have noted the phenomenal rise of Laura Maverick, the concert contralto, who is a member of the famous family of that name who have all been so closely identified with the history and development of the Lone Star state.

This season, Miss Maverick is appearing in joint recital with Carl Hahn, a violinist of note. He is a Texas boy, adopted, at least, having been located in San Antonio as the conductor of the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra and the director of several musical clubs.

Arrangements have been completed for an extensive concert tour of the principal cities in Texas and the southwest, beginning immediately after the holidays.

Miss Maverick, as an experiment, sang a Mexican song, "La Golondrina" for an encore at one of her New York concerts last winter. It made an instantaneous success. The novelty and charm, together with the unusualness of the music, brought so many requests for other Mexican songs that this season a group of them occupy a place in Miss Maverick's programs.

Mr. Hahn plays several of his own compositions in addition to the classic literature for the violin.



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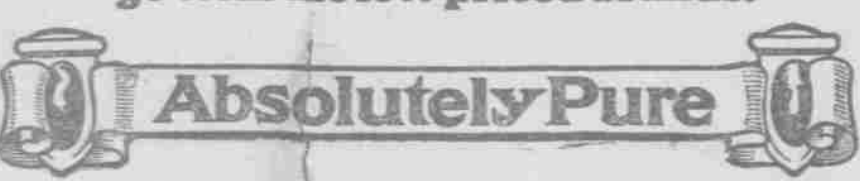
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